

- ◆ Commutation is the only non-judicial means by which a life sentence can be changed to a specified number of years. Only then is it possible for an inmate to be released from prison by virtue of parole or diminution of sentence. Many applications to the board request commutation of sentence--that is, a shorter sentence than the one imposed by the court.
- ◆ An inmate cannot be recommended for commutation of sentence until the board announces and holds a hearing.

Law and policy require notice to victims and other persons and agencies at least 30 days before an inmate’s hearing.

Commutation requests approved by the board are sent to the Governor, who makes the final decision to grant or deny the board’s recommendation.

Current hearing docket information and hearing outcomes for both the Parole and the Pardon Boards are available on the Corrections web site. Additional information about board operations is available by contacting the boards as follows:

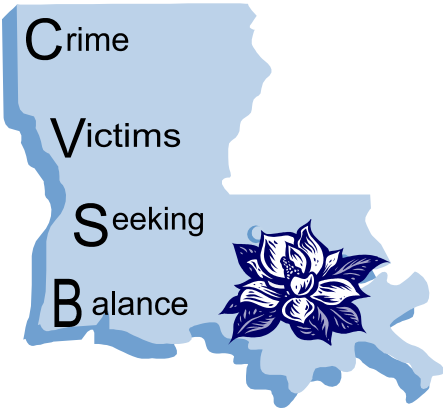
Board of Parole (225) 342-6622
Board of Pardons (225) 342-5421

Juveniles in Secure Care

Youth assigned to secure care are given determinate sentences by their committing court and can earn a recommendation for early release, unless adjudicated for first or second degree murder, aggravated rape, aggravated kidnapping, or treason. Commitment for these offenses requires placement in a secure facility until age 21. Youth committed for armed robbery must be placed in a secure facility for the full term imposed by the court.

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**Crime Victims
Services
Bureau**



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**Louisiana Department of Public
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The Crime Victims Services Bureau is a service of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections. Victims of crime and other persons directly affected by a crime may register with the Crime Victims Services Bureau, if the person who committed the crime is sentenced to the department’s custody, placed on felony probation, or adjudicated delinquent and placed in secure institutional care.

Registered persons will receive the following information about adult inmates:

- ◆ Initial housing location and projected release dates.
- ◆ Furlough, release from incarceration, and sentence change due to court action.
- ◆ Assignment to work release.
- ◆ Escape and apprehension.

The department works with the Board of Parole and Board of Pardons so that registered victims receive notice of parole and pardon hearings.

The department does not provide notice of transfer between institutions.

Registered persons will receive direct notice of a juvenile’s discharge, escape, and subsequent apprehension (if the juvenile is placed in secure institutional care).

- ◆ Notice of a juvenile’s furlough and/or reassignment from institutional to non-secure custody can be provided only to the prosecuting District Attorney.
- ◆ Registration requests involving juvenile offenders must be authorized through the office of the prosecuting District Attorney.

Persons wishing to register for notification, may contact the Crime Victims Services Bureau or their District Attorney’s office or download a registration form from the agency’s web site at www.corrections.state.la.us.



Persons may also contact the Crime Victims Services Bureau for additional information:

- ◆ The department’s policies, programs, and practices.
- ◆ Other agencies and organizations that assist crime victims.
- ◆ Ways to stop unsolicited communications from inmates.



Release from Adult Institutions

Most inmates are released by parole or diminution of sentence to parole supervision.

Parole is conditional release from prison by action of the Parole Board. Inmates cannot be released on parole until the board announces and holds a hearing, which is open to the public.

Parole-eligible inmates do not apply for an initial parole hearing; board staff schedule them automatically. (Requests for rehearings are initiated by inmates and may be denied by the board.)

Parole hearings are held about a month before an inmate’s parole eligibility date (the date on which law allows release on parole).

Laws and policy require notice to victims and certain other persons and agencies at least 30 days before the hearing date.

Inmates granted parole must agree to and follow a list of conditions. Failure to follow the rules may result in return to prison.

Inmates are monitored by a parole officer until their “full term date,” the date on which the full term imposed by the court is completed.

Diminution of sentence release is conditional release from prison based on accrual of “good time” credits.

Laws passed by the legislature enable some inmates to shorten time in prison by positive actions while there. (Inmates can also lose such “good time” credit by breaking rules or laws, thereby extending their time in prison.)

When an inmate’s diminution of sentence date arrives, the department must release the inmate from prison to the community to be supervised “as if on parole.” There is not hearing, but the inmate is supervised by a parole officer.

Inmates must agree to and follow a list of conditions. Failure to follow these rules may result in return to prison.

Inmates are monitored by a parole officer until their full term date.

Inmates can be released in other ways—for example, by court order or at full term or on good time without supervision. Contact the Crime Victims Services Bureau for additional information.

How long must inmates serve in prison before being released on parole or diminution of sentence?

Inmates sentenced to a fixed number of years for a crime of violence committed on or after 1/1/97 must serve at least 85% of the time imposed before they can be released on parole or diminution of sentence.

Most inmates sentenced for crimes committed before 1/1/97 and inmates sentenced for crimes other than crimes of violence committed after that date are eligible for release as explained below.

- ◆ A parole-eligible first offender can be released on parole after serving one-third of the sentence imposed by the court.
- ◆ A parole-eligible second offender can be released on parole after serving one-half of the sentence imposed by the court.
- ◆ Inmates classified as third offenders or greater are not eligible for parole.
- ◆ An inmate who is sentenced to 30 years or more in prison, serves 20 years in actual custody, and has reached age 45 is eligible for parole consideration. (This law does not apply if the inmate is under sentence of life or death or committed a crime of violence on or after 1/1/97.)

- ◆ If an inmate is eligible to earn good time credit toward diminution of sentence release, his earliest eligibility for release will come after he serves about ½ of the sentence.

Inmates sentenced to life in prison cannot be paroled or released on diminution of sentence unless the sentence is commuted. (See section re. Board of Pardons.)

Law identifies the following as crimes of violence:

Solicitation for murder	First degree murder
Second degree murder	Manslaughter
Aggravated battery	Second degree battery
Aggravated assault	Aggravated rape
Forcible rape	Sexual battery
Simple rape	Simple kidnapping
Aggravated sexual battery	Aggravated kidnapping
Aggravated arson	Second degree kidnapping
Extortion	Aggravated burglary
First degree robbery	Armed robbery
Purse snatching	Simple robbery
Carjacking	Terrorism
Intentional exposure to AIDS	
Assault by drive-by shooting	
Aggravated crime against nature	
Aggravated criminal damage to property	
Illegal use of weapons or dangerous instrumentalities	
Mingling harmful substances	

The attempt to commit one of these crimes qualifies as a crime of violence. Law allows a court to designate other crimes of violence.



Victims can call the Bureau to leave a recorded message. Someone will return the call on the next regular business day.

Division of Probation and Parole/Adult

Officers in the Division’s 20 district offices are responsible for the supervision of inmates released on parole and diminution of sentence and those placed on felony probation. Probation and parole officers supervise payment of restitution and prepare reports for decision-makers (including the Courts and Parole and Pardon Boards). Officers interview victims for many of those reports and include victims’ statements about the possibility of release and monetary losses, which might require restitution upon release. Officers notify victims about up-coming parole hearings. Officers have the authority to arrest probationers and parolees with or without a warrant.

- ◆ Inmates released from incarceration to supervision have 48 hours to report to a district office.
- ◆ Persons on supervision must have permission to leave the boundaries of the supervising district.

One way victims can make sure that probation and parole officers can contact them is to register and maintain a current mailing address and telephone number with the Crime Victims Services Bureau.

Can the Board of Pardons influence an inmate’s release?

The Board of Pardons handles inmate requests for clemency--that is, for pardon, commutation, and restoration of rights lost as a result of a criminal conviction. Access to a hearing before the Board of Pardons is provided by the state’s constitution. A court cannot make an inmate ineligible for consideration by the Board of Pardons; however, state statutes do impose restrictions on how soon after sentencing inmates may apply for commutation.